

GAS GENERATOR RELEASE MECHANISMABSTRACT

An inflator 10 of a vehicle occupant protection system, for example,
5 contains an elongated housing 12 having a first end 14 and a second 16. The
gas generator 10 includes a sealed pressurized gas supply or gas tank 18 in
fluid communication with the first end 14 upon inflator 10 operation. A first
seal 36 seals the first end 14 prior to gas generator 10 operation. A notched
support member 56 is wedged within the housing 12 and fixes the first seal
10 36 against a sealed opening 24 of the gas tank 18, thereby preventing fluid
flow during gas generator 10 inactivity. Upon gas generator 10 activation,
the support member 56 is fractured by a force produced by an initiator 68
thereby releasing pressurized gas into the first end 14 and through the housing
12.

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